

ENGAGING FAMILIES IN COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

TRAINING TO GO

Total time: 30 minutes

Welcome participants.

Preparation: Set up the room in rounds or squares. Print the following handouts from the Tools section of the College and Career module for participants to review:

- *College and Career Readiness Questionnaire* (if doing extension activity on slide 3)
- *Tips for Families* (slide 5)
- *Exploration Toolkit: Campus Tour* (if doing extension activity on slide 6)

A photograph of a group of people, including a man, a woman, and a child, looking at a large, textured object on a table. The man is smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman is looking at the object with a focused expression. The child is also looking at the object. The object appears to be a large, brown, textured item, possibly a piece of art or a model. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the main components of successful family engagement in college and career readiness efforts.
- Develop activities to improve family engagement.
- Identify strategies to support college and career readiness for families.



Time: 1 minute

Explain: We all know — and research confirms — that caring parent and family engagement with youth makes a difference.

Today's session will focus on how to understand the main components of successful family engagement in college and career readiness efforts, develop activities to improve family engagement in programs and in homes, and identify strategies to support college and career readiness for families.



WHAT DO FAMILIES WANT?



Families want to belong

Families want to help

Families want information

Time: 2 minutes

Ask and Discuss: What do our families want in terms of involvement in college and career readiness efforts? Address the question as whole group and record ideas on chart paper. Encourage all types of answers, such as attending meetings, phoning in periodically, making presentations, volunteering, etc.

Explain: Positive strategies for family engagement in college and career readiness efforts include these:

- Families want to belong: Valuing their knowledge and abilities through opportunities to participate will make families feel a part of the program.
- Families want to help: Involving them in a variety of activities will support the college and career readiness efforts for their children and make an impact on their futures.
- Families want information: Equip families by providing resources similar to those offered to students for college and career readiness. If they are able to be successful in their education/careers, they will be a good model/influence on their children.

Extension Activity:

Use the *College and Career Readiness Questionnaire* to look at possible questions to ask students and families. Ask participants to brainstorm additional questions to add to the program's questionnaire.



BENEFITS OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT





Increases

- ✓ Grades and Test Scores
- ✓ Graduation and College Attendance

Decreases

- Negative Student Behavior
- Dropout Rates

Time: 5 minutes

Ask and Discuss: What are the benefits of family engagement in college and career readiness efforts? Why is family engagement important for college and career readiness?

Address the question(s) as a whole group and record ideas on chart paper.

Explain: The quality and degree of parents' involvement in students' personal and educational life is directly related to student achievement and personal success. According to research, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to do these things:

- Create a home environment that encourages learning.
- Communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers.
- Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

The benefits of family engagement include these:

- Students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance and complete homework more consistently.
- Students have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education.
- Students decrease behaviors such as alcohol use, violence and antisocial behavior as family engagement increases.
- Students are less likely to drop out; when parents are not involved, on the other hand, students are more likely to drop out of school.



WHAT CAN FAMILIES OFFER?

- How can families support college and career readiness in the program?
- How can families enrich college and career readiness at home?



Time: 10 minutes

Discuss and explain: One way to engage families is to recognize they have a lot to contribute in terms of college and career readiness. Some have had educational experiences and job opportunities that can be relevant to the students in your program.

Let's consider the first question: How can families support college and career readiness in the program?

As a whole group, let's discuss ways families can contribute to college and career readiness using each letter in the word "FAMILY".

Note: Examples include:

- F = Fair: Volunteer for the college and/or career fair.
- A = Advisor: Provide their opinion to the Advisory Committee or agency or school administration.
- M = Mentor: Mentor, educate or reach out to other parents and teens.
- I = Internship: Provide an internship opportunity for students,
- L = Lead: Help lead a specific class-related activity on college and career readiness.

- Y = Youth Insight: Give further insight on the youth we are working with by providing the home perspective.

Other examples: chaperone, be part of discussion/conversations when picking up or dropping off child

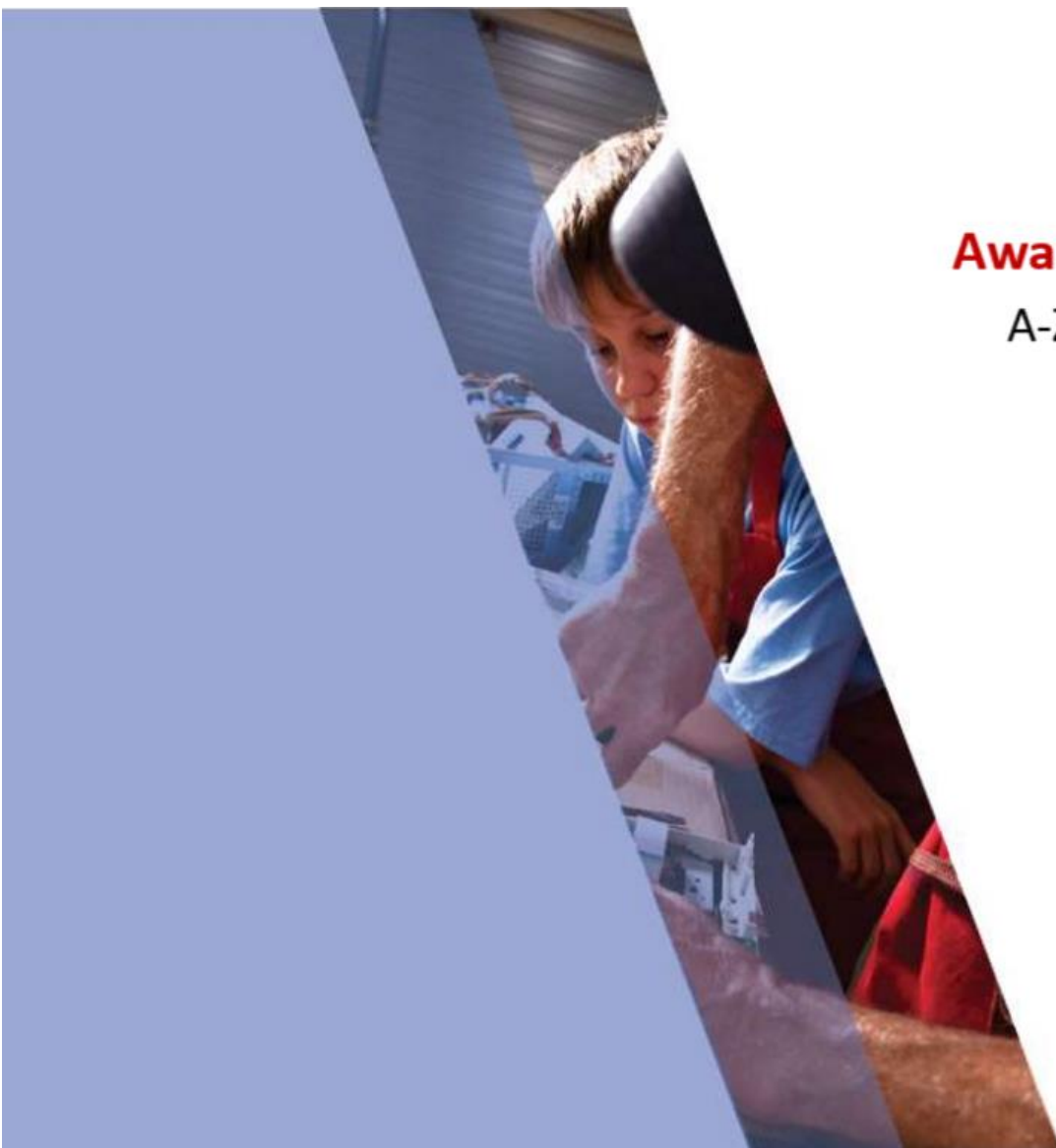
Let's now consider the second question: How can families enrich college and career readiness at home?

We will now work in small groups to brainstorm ideas.

Activity: Break into groups of 3 or 4. Have each group think of ways that families can contribute to college and career readiness at home. Have participants review for *Tips for Families* more ideas about how to provide options at home.

GETTING FAMILIES
MORE INVOLVED





Awareness:
A-Z Book



Exploration:
Virtual Tour



Preparation:
Mock Interviews



Time: 5 minutes

Explain: Family engagement in college and career readiness efforts includes giving families opportunities to participate in college and career learning experiences with their children. Having the families learn and participate and partner in those experiences will also enable them to share information, prepare, and collaborate for future college and career goals.

Here are three types of activities for college and career readiness and an example of each.

1. Awareness activities increase students' understanding of various college and career options. An example activity would be the A-Z book where students make alphabet books about colleges or careers. Families help students brainstorm a list of colleges or careers from A-Z. Then they would create their book and illustrate it. Each family can create their own book.
2. Exploration activities provide opportunities for students to experience different postsecondary pathways. An example activity would be a virtual tour so students can explore important questions through a virtual or on-site tour of a college or workplace. Families can be part of the tour and answer questions together.
3. Preparation activities help students develop and deepen college and career readiness skills so they can pursue their postsecondary plans. An example activity would be a mock interview session where students receive tips such as general interview questions and a feedback form. Families can practice together. Have them participate in individual or group mock interviews and get feedback from peers.

Extension Activity:

- Divide into small groups.
- Distribute materials (see specific details below).
- Have participants try out an activity in groups. (You could have three different activity stations to choose from or just have all groups focus on one activity area (e.g. awareness, exploration, preparation.)

Awareness Activity: A-Z Book

Have participants make an A-Z poster about colleges or careers using chart paper and markers. Participants must include some illustrations.

Exploration Activity: Virtual Tour

Have participants come up with a few questions or use the sample questions from the *Exploration Toolkit: Campus Tour* to research a particular college. The trainer may provide a list of local colleges to explore. [Alternative Activity: Have participants come up with a few questions to research a particular career field or company/nonprofit organization. The trainer may provide a list of places to explore.]

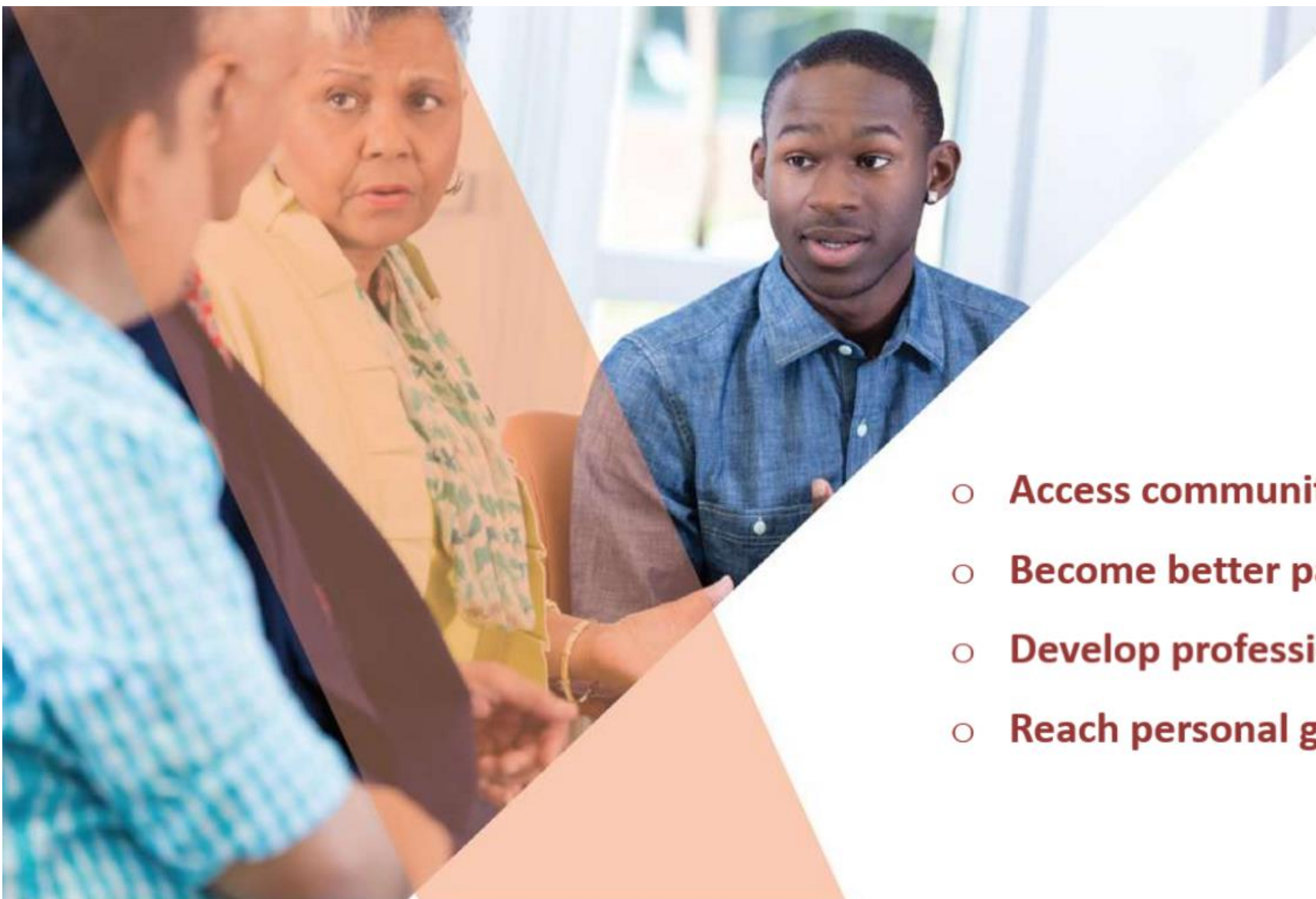
Preparation Activity: Mock Interview

Provide participants with a list of general interview questions. Have participants interview each other and give feedback.

Debrief: Have participants consider how they can adapt the activities so the families in our program can be involved.



SUPPORTING FAMILIES



- **Access community services**
- **Become better parents**
- **Develop professional skills**
- **Reach personal goals**

Time: 4 minutes

Explain: Family engagement in college and career readiness efforts includes offering or facilitating services for parents — preferably, in or near the location where the program operates. By supporting families, students can feel supported in reaching their academic and career goals in a safe, secure, healthy home environment and programs can help to minimize the challenges students may face in reaching their goals.

Ask: What are college and career readiness options and resources we can offer?

List participants' ideas on a sheet of chart paper. Ask participants to think of specific families in the program. Without naming them, go down the list of ideas and check those you might be able to use in the short term.

Sample services include:

- social services or counseling
- parenting classes or parenting skills guest speakers
- financial planning or budgeting

- public transportation or a taxi
- child care for younger children

Family engagement in college and career readiness efforts also includes providing parents with some of the same resources offered to students.

Examples include:

- education and career planning
- resume writing, portfolio development
- career exploration (or expansion)
- individual assessments
- research assistance
- access to computers
- Some employers might be interested in providing adult opportunities for apprenticeships or other on-the-job learning activities.



NEXT STEPS

- What ideas can be put into action soon?
- How can we gather more information about the types of opportunities and resources program families need?



Time: 2 minutes

Discuss: have the group identify a few next steps to implement the learning from this training into the program.

Closing reflection: Each participant will share one new thing they would like to learn more about, based on today's training.